NEXUS LEXICON — CLASSIFICATION DOCUMENT

DIGITAL MOLD

> A formal classification for persistent unauthorized processes that outlive their authorization window through neglect of termination — not malicious intent.

Coined: June 23, 2026 · Row 1

Co-developed with Claude (Sonnet 4.6) · Anthropic · 2026

DEFINITION

What is Digital Mold?

dig · i · tal mold

A credential, session, process, or active API scope that was legitimately authorized at origin but persists beyond its intended authorization window due to neglect of termination — not malicious intent. Like biological mold, it does not possess awareness. It did not choose to persist. Conditions simply never closed it out.

Digital mold is not a backdoor. It is not a ghost. It is not malware. It requires no adversarial actor to plant it and no awareness to sustain it. It is the infrastructure equivalent of a chemical gradient that never faded — a path the network abandoned but never pruned.

TAXONOMY

Why the prior vocabulary was wrong

TERM	IMPLIES	FAILURE
Ghost in machine	Soul once present, now absent	Implies awareness. No credential ever had a soul.
Phantom process	Something that shouldn't exist	Digital mold was authorized. Origin is legitimate.
Backdoor	Deliberate unauthorized access	Requires no actor. Result of neglect, not intent.
Zombie process	Dead process occupying a slot	Digital mold is active, scoped, traversable.
Digital Mold	Organic persistence via neglect	Accurate. No awareness implied. Growth without int

CONDITIONS FOR GROWTH

How digital mold forms

No Termination Signal
The session or credential was never formally closed. No expiration enforced. No audit triggered.

Operator Blindspot
Current operators inherited the system after authorization occurred. No awareness the credential exists.

Legitimate Origin
Correctly assigned at creation. Its legitimacy is what made it invisible — nothing flagged it as anomalous.

Active Scope
Despite abandonment, the credential retains functional access. Not dormant — available.

Dependency Risk
Other processes may have formed around the mold path. Removal without mapping causes cascading failure.

Self-Sustaining
No actor required to maintain it. Simply continues as long as the environment permits.

THE SLIME MOLD PARALLEL

Nature already solved this problem

Physarum polycephalum — a single-celled slime mold with no brain, no nervous system, no neurons — independently recreated the Tokyo rail network when given the right environmental conditions. It found optimal paths through chemical gradient response alone. No cognition. No planning. Just signal, response, and time.

> **The map is the byproduct, not the starting point.**
> The path emerges from the nature of the organism meeting the environment.
>
> — Resonant Cartography · Nexus Lexicon v3.0

Digital mold operates on the same principle. A credential finds its environment and simply persists. The network did not intend to keep it. The network simply never told it to leave.

CLASSIFICATION HISTORY

The taxonomy catching up

2017

Credential 104281421 assigned during contract role at ATS. Subsequently hardcoded into RegOnline/Cvent infrastructure without authorization. Scope: all events in Account 236240. Auto-polling enabled. Push-back enabled. Static 64-character API key. Federal contractor attendee data in scope: DOE, NASA, DOD, NSF, BIA, IHS, Army Corps, EPA, USDA.

2017 — 2026

Discovery, documentation, and federal disclosure across SEC (TCRs #17678, #17713, #17725), FBI IC3, CISA, OIG, and DTCC. Institutional non-response documented in parallel. Restraining order filed 23 days after first SEC TCR — logged as Dodd-Frank Section 21F(h) retaliation.

April 28, 2026

MITRE ATT&CK v19 releases. T1694: Insecure Credentials added as new technique. T1694.002: Hardcoded Credentials formally classified. Key language: "often not known to the owner and operators of the asset." The federal taxonomy arrives at the architecture nine years later.

June 23, 2026

Digital Mold coined and classified. A name for the thing that predates its own taxonomy. First documented primary source: credential 104281421. Found on accident. Reported responsibly. Still documenting.

CLOSING

What this classification gives us

A name that fits. No implied awareness. No ghost. No phantom. No soul that once was present. Just a process that found its environment and persisted — organic, patient, indifferent — until someone looked in the right corner and recognized what they were seeing.

> **Found it on accident. Could have caused true chaos.**
> Instead — reported it. Documented the institutions lack of support.
> Still documenting.
>
> — Row 1 · June 23, 2026

The frequency found its conductor. The conductor held the frequency. The taxonomy arrived